

Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge

Public Involvement Summary

Rocky Flats Becomes A National Wildlife Refuge

The future Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) was established by Congress on December 28, 2001. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is beginning development of a Comprehensive Conservation Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (CCP/EIS). The plan, to be completed in 2004, will direct wildlife conservation, management and wildlife-dependent recreation at the Refuge. This Public Involvement Summary outlines the public involvement process and specifies how and when the public can inform the future management direction of the Refuge.

Rocky Flats is a valuable addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System primarily because of the site's federally-listed threatened wildlife species and the presence of rare plant communities. Additionally, the site provides open space and striking vistas of the Front Range mountain backdrop for numerous Denver metropolitan area communities. Congress determined that national interests would be best served through Service management of the Rocky Flats landscape as a National Wildlife Refuge, ensuring preservation of open space and wildlife habitat following the completion of cleanup operations and closure.

Some areas of the Rocky Flats site will contain residual contamination and will require further management by the Department of Energy (DOE). Cleanup and closure issues are being handled separately from this planning effort. The Rocky Flats site will not be transferred to the Service until cleanup and closure by DOE are complete. The DOE facility complex near the northwest corner of the site, known as the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, will not be part of the Refuge.

Public Involvement

The purpose of developing the plan with public input is to craft informed decisions through the exchange of ideas between the public and the Service. The public involvement process ensures that interested and affected individuals, organizations, agencies and governmental entities are consulted and given opportunities to have their ideas heard.

Throughout the three-year planning process, the Service will focus on informing the public, gathering public input, and analyzing public comments.



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Primary management purposes of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge will include restoring and preserving native ecosystems; providing habitat for, and population management of, native plants and migratory and resident wildlife; conserving threatened and endangered species; and providing opportunities for scientific research.

*Left:
Swainson's Hawk.*



Shapins Associates



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Department of Energy

Informing the Public

The Service strives to keep the public informed about the planning process. The following are resources the Service will use to stay in touch with the public:

■ **Planning Updates and Announcements** – Over the course of the three-year planning process, six planning updates will be published and distributed to the public. The updates report on the CCP/EIS process, announce all opportunities for public involvement and document workshop results. They will be mailed to the project's mailing list, distributed at presentations and workshops, made accessible through community information networks, main branch libraries, and made available online. Postcards designed to gauge the public's interest and to announce opportunities for involvement will be mailed out at regular intervals throughout the process.

■ **Media Coverage** – Announcements and reports in local newspapers and on television and radio stations will notify the public about opportunities for involvement and the progress of the CCP/EIS.

■ **Website** – The public may access the project online at rockyflats.fws.gov for information on the planning process and to download planning documents as they become available.

Gathering Public Input

Public involvement will involve both idea generation and idea review.

■ **Public Workshops** – The public will be encouraged to participate in a series of workshops held at strategic phases of the plan development including Public Scoping, Alternative Plans and Draft Plan Review Workshops. The focus of these forums will be to generate ideas, gather input on refuge planning issues, and educate the public on refuge issues and the planning process. Workshops will be held in the communities of Arvada, Westminster, Broomfield, and Boulder during each strategic phase.

■ **Focus Group Workshops** – During these workshops, the Service will facilitate a discussion among technical experts about specific refuge issues such as habitat management strategies, facility development and recreational uses. These

experts will be asked to generate ideas for future management and will assist in the review of planning alternatives. The workshops will be open to the public for observation.

■ **Presentations & Briefing** – In order to keep the public and stakeholder groups posted on the CCP/EIS process, presentations and briefings will be conducted throughout the planning process.

Analyzing Public Input

The Service will review and consider all substantive comments gathered at workshops, other public meetings, and those comments received electronically and via mail.

Upper Left: Refuge planning involves public review and comment.

Upper Center: Environmental Education is one of the priorities of public use.

Upper Right: Scientific research supports the survival of the threatened Preble's Jumping Mouse.

Lower Left: Arnica is a colorful addition to a rich diversity of native plants.

Opposite: Big Bluestem - the chief grass of a rare plant community on the refuge.



Schedule

Development of a CCP/EIS for the future refuge will span three years and will involve seven stages:

Planning Stage

1. Preplanning (May 2002-July 2002)

Reaffirm legislative purpose
Identify planning needs of the refuge
Develop public involvement program and project work plan

Public Involvement

Public Involvement Process
Published June 26, 2002

2. Public Involvement and Scoping (August 2002 - Oct. 2002)

Identify potential issues, concerns, and opportunities

Planning Update 1
Public Workshops 1 - *Scoping*
September 9,10,11,12
Focus Group Workshops

3. Review Vision Statement and Goals (Nov. 2002 - Dec. 2002)

Develop goals, objectives, and programming
Refine vision statement and identify significant issues

Planning Update 2

4. Develop and Analyze Alternatives (Jan. 2003 - May 2003)

Refine issues, goals, objectives and strategies
Develop alternative plans

Planning Update 3
Alternative Plan Workbook
Public Workshops 2 - *Alternative Plans*

5. Prepare Preliminary Draft CCP/EIS (June 2003 - Jan. 2004)

Select a preferred action alternative
Draft compatibility determinants
Prepare preliminary draft CCP/EIS for internal review

Planning Update 4

6. Prepare Public Draft CCP/EIS (Feb. 2004 - June 2004)

Prepare draft CCP/EIS for public review

Draft CCP/EIS Review
Planning Update 5
Planning Workshops 3 - *Draft Plans*

7. Final CCP/EIS and Record of Decision (July 2004 - Dec. 2004)

Respond to public comments
Final CCP/EIS and Record of Decision

Planning Update 6
Summary Brochure
Public Celebration - *December 2004*



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge
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Stakeholders List

The stakeholder groups that have expressed an interest in the comprehensive conservation planning process include:

■ *State & Federal Agencies -*

State public agencies, congressional representatives, federal agencies, tribal governments

■ *Communities, Organizations & Interest Groups -*

Rocky Flats Coalition of Local Governments and its member governments (Arvada, Boulder, Boulder County, Broomfield, Jefferson County, Superior and Westminster), Rocky Flats Citizen Advisory Board, the cities of Thornton, Northglenn, Golden, Lafayette, Louisville and other local communities, Rocky Flats Cold War Museum, environmental and conservation groups, community and neighborhood groups, and neighboring landowners

■ *Public at Large* - anyone who wishes to get involved

Contact

Public comments will be accepted by written letter or e-mail at the following addresses:

Rocky Flats NWR
Comprehensive Conservation Plan
Attn: Laurie Shannon,
Planning Team Leader
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
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